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Weekly Summary

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CG WS 77-019
May 13, 1977

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The WEEKLY SUMMARY, issued every Friday morning by the Current Reporting Group, reports and analyzes significant developments of the week through noon on Thursday. It frequently includes material coordinated with or prepared by the Office of Regional and Political Analysis, the Office of Economic Research, the Office of Strategic Research, the Office of Scientific Intelligence, the Office of Weapons Intelligence, and the Office of Geographic and Cartographic Research.

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Comments and queries on the contents of this publication are welcome. They may be directed to the editor of the Weekly,

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Western Hemisphere

ARGENTINA 43-45

The recent arrest of former president Alejandro Lanusse for suspected financial wrongdoing in office has strong political overtones. Three other top officials of the military government that General Lanusse headed in the early 1970s are also being held.

Lanusse's arrest has been linked with alleged improprieties on his part in connection with a government contract for construction of an aluminum plant, but it is clear that political considerations were uppermost in moving against the former president at this time. His alleged misdeeds were neither unusual nor surprising by Argentine standards, and any number of officials could be called to account for similar improprieties.

For some time, however, Lanusse has drawn the ire of the current military regime, particularly the so-called hard-line officers who distrust him for his role in paving the way for the return of Juan Peron. More recently, Lanusse's criticisms of the government's harsh security practices, his high public profile, and his apparent ties to prominent newspapermen have contributed to suspicions that he is appealing to important civilian sectors as a potential political leader. The regime is not now prepared even to consider a return to normal politics.

The case against Lanusse has been under investigation for several years, but relatively little has been heard about it recently, and many Argentines had assumed the matter would be dropped. Moreover, the case has been overshadowed by recent developments in the investigation of alleged connections between the family of missing financier David Graiver and other prominent citizens—including former government officials—and the terrorist Montoneros.

The conduct of the case against Lanusse, as well as the Graiver investigation, could provide a rough gauge of the relative strengths and weaknesses of hard-liners and moderates within the regime. If the campaign becomes more aggressive and wide-ranging, it will indicate that hard-liners are gaining the upper hand.

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